

Please replace pending claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 13, 19, 21-24, 27-28, 31, 33, and 34 with the following amended claims:

1. (Twice Amended) A method for validating gaming vouchers dispensed from an on-line electronic gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

receiving pay-out voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said pay-out voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from an on-line electronic gaming machine at the termination of a gaming session;

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B automatically transmitting from the on-line electronic gaming machine, contemporaneously with dispensing the pay-out voucher, said pay-out voucher identification information and a related pay-out amount to a central network computer through an on-line gaming system connection;

creating and storing a voucher record in a pay-out voucher database in response to said pay-out voucher identification information, and storing said pay-out amount in connection therewith;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a pay-out voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to the central network computer;

conveying the pay-out voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

retrieving the voucher record in the pay-out voucher database based upon said pay-out voucher identification information;

confirming, based on payment information in said voucher record, that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid;

updating said voucher record to indicate that the pay-out voucher has been paid;

transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if either said voucher record was not found or else the pay-out voucher was already paid; and

displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device.

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2. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

reading the pay-out amount from said voucher record;

transmitting, along with said voucher pay-out approval indication, said pay-out amount from the central network computer to said wireless, portable computer device via said remote interface; and

displaying said pay-out amount at said wireless, portable computer device.

6. (Twice Amended) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an on-line electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

a wireless, portable computer device, said wireless, portable computer device comprising a display, a data input interface, and a radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with said radio transceiver;

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a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface and to an on-line gaming machine, said central computer programmed with a voucher verification program and configured to receive pay-out voucher identification information and a pay-out amount generated by the on-line electronic gaming machine when a pay-out voucher is dispensed to a player from the on-line electronic gaming machine at the termination of a gaming session; and

a pay-out voucher database connected to said central computer;

wherein said central computer generates and stores pay-out voucher records in said pay-out voucher database in response to receiving the pay-out voucher identification and pay-out amount from the on-line electronic gaming machine;

wherein said voucher verification program receives voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable computer device via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher record in said pay-out voucher database, confirms by checking the voucher record that the pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect

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β that the pay-out voucher has been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to said wireless, portable computer device if the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication to said wireless, portable computer device; and

wherein said wireless, portable computer device receives through its data input interface voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers dispensed from the on-line electronic gaming machines, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.

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β 8. (Amended) The system of claim 6, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines including said on-line gaming machine, wherein the electronic gaming machines transmit pay-out voucher identification information and a pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a pay-out voucher is dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said pay-out voucher database in response to said pay-out voucher identification information and said pay-out amount.

13. (Twice Amended) A method for on-line or off-line validation of gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, said method comprising the steps of:

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β receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from an electronic gaming machine;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to a central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

attempting to retrieve a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said voucher identification information;

confirming, if said voucher record was retrieved, that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid based on payment information in said voucher record, and transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if the pay-out voucher was already paid;

displaying, if said voucher record was retrieved, an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device;

transmitting, if said voucher record could not be retrieved, a voucher record unavailable indication from said central network computer, via said remote wireless interface, to said wireless, portable computer device;

receiving said voucher record unavailable indication at said wireless, portable computer device and, in response thereto, displaying an error message;

receiving a voucher amount at said wireless, remote computer device after displaying said error message;

transmitting said voucher amount and said voucher identification information, via said wireless interface, to said central network computer from said wireless, portable computer device; and

preparing a voucher database reconciliation record at said central network computer for updating said voucher database at a subsequent time to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid.

19. (Amended) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

a plurality of wireless, portable pay-out verification devices, each of said wireless, portable pay-out verification devices comprising a display, a data input interface, and a radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with the radio transceivers of said wireless, portable pay-out verification devices and distinguishing transmissions therefrom;

a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface, said central computer programmed with a pay-out voucher verification program and configured to receive pay-out voucher identification information and a pay-out amount generated and automatically conveyed by the on-line electronic gaming machine when a pay-out voucher is dispensed to a player from the on-line electronic gaming machine at the termination of a gaming session; and

a pay-out voucher database connected to said central computer;

wherein said central computer generates and stores pay-out voucher records in said pay-out voucher database in response to receiving the pay-out voucher identification and pay-out amount automatically conveyed by the on-line electronic gaming machine; and

wherein said voucher verification program receives pay-out voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable pay-out verification devices via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher record in said pay-out voucher database for each received pay-out voucher validation request, confirms from the pay-out voucher database that the pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect that the pay-out voucher has been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to the wireless, portable pay-out verification device originally sending the pay-out voucher validation request if the pay-out voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication; and

wherein each wireless, portable pay-out verification device transmitting a pay-out voucher validation request receives the pay-out voucher validation request information relating to pay-out vouchers through its data input interface, transmits pay-out voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on its display in response to receiving them from said central computer.

21. (Twice Amended) The system of claim 19, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines including said on-line electronic gaming machine, wherein an electronic gaming machine transmits pay-out voucher identification information and a related pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a pay-out voucher is dispensed from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said pay-out voucher database in response to said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount.

22. (Twice Amended) The system of claim 21, wherein said pay-out voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the pay-out voucher was initially dispensed.

23. (Amended) The system of claim 19, wherein each of said wireless, portable pay-out verification devices comprises a personal digital assistant.

24. (Amended) A system for validating pay-out vouchers dispensed from on-line electronic gaming machines, the system comprising:

a central computer;

a pay-out voucher database accessible to said central computer, storing pay-out voucher information and related pay-out amounts generated and automatically conveyed by a plurality of on-line electronic gaming machines when pay-out vouchers are dispensed at the termination of player gaming sessions, each of said pay-out vouchers representing an accumulated pay-out amount payable to the player;

a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport, each of said wireless computer devices comprising a display, a data input interface, and a wireless transceiver; and

a wireless interface communicatively coupled to said central computer, capable of communicating with the wireless transceivers of said wireless computer devices;

138 wherein said central computer receives pay-out voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless computer devices via said wireless interface, confirms by checking the pay-out voucher database that a given pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, and sends to the wireless computer device that sent the pay-out voucher validation request, via said wireless interface, either a voucher pay-out approval indication or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication depending upon whether the pay-out voucher was previously paid; and

wherein each of said wireless computer devices is configured to receive pay-out voucher identification information through its data input interface from pay-out vouchers dispensed by the on-line electronic gaming machines, to transmit pay-out voucher validation requests to said central computer via its wireless transceiver in response to receiving the pay-out voucher identification information through its data input interface, and to display voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications from the central computer on its display.

27. (Amended) A system for facilitating real-time validation of pay-out vouchers dispensed from on-line electronic gaming machines so as to assist gaming floor personnel, the system comprising:

139 a central computer;

a gaming machine interface via which a plurality of on-line electronic gaming machines automatically convey voucher identification information and voucher pay-out amounts generated by the on-line electronic gaming machines when pay-out vouchers are dispensed therefrom at the termination of player gaming sessions;

a pay-out voucher database accessible to said central computer for storing the voucher identification information and voucher pay-out amounts from the on-line electronic gaming machines;

a wireless interface communicatively coupled to said central computer; and

a plurality of wireless portable computer devices adapted for manual transport, each of said wireless portable computer devices comprising

a data input interface configured to receive manually or semi-manually entered pay-out voucher identification information based

upon information present on the pay-out vouchers dispensed from the on-line electronic gaming machines;

a wireless transceiver configured to communicate with said central computer via said wireless interface and transmit pay-out voucher validation requests thereby, and to receive validation responses from the central computer, and

a display configured to display information pertaining to the validation responses received from the central computer.

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28. (Amended) The system of claim 27, wherein said central computer receives the pay-out voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless portable computer devices via said wireless interface, confirms by checking the pay-out voucher database that a given pay-out voucher has not yet been paid, and sends to the wireless portable computer device that sent the pay-out voucher validation request, via said wireless interface, either a voucher pay-out approval indication or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication depending upon whether the voucher was previously paid.

31. (Amended) A method for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from an electronic gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

conducting a gaming session at an on-line electronic gaming machine;

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accumulating a credit amount from the gaming session at the on-line electronic gaming machine;

receiving, at the on-line electronic gaming machine, an instruction from a player to issue a pay-out voucher;

issuing a pay-out voucher from the on-line electronic gaming machine in response to receiving said instruction, the pay-out voucher comprising a unique voucher identifier and representing an accumulated credit amount payable to the player;

contemporaneously with issuing the pay-out voucher, transmitting from the on-line electronic gaming machine voucher pay-out transaction information including the unique voucher identifier and a pay-out amount representing the

accumulated credit amount to a central computer network via an on-line gaming interface;

receiving at the central network computer, from the on-line electronic gaming machine, voucher pay-out transaction information including the unique voucher identifier and the pay-out amount corresponding to a pay-out voucher dispensed from the on-line electronic gaming machine;

creating and storing a voucher record in a voucher database in response to said voucher pay-out transaction information;

receiving by manual or semi-manual input said voucher identifier at a wireless, portable computer device;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to the central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

retrieving a voucher record in a voucher database in response to said voucher validation request;

confirming from the voucher record that the corresponding pay-out voucher has not yet been paid;

updating said voucher record to indicate that the pay-out voucher has been paid;

transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from the central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if either said voucher record was not found or if the pay-out voucher was already paid; and

displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval at said wireless, portable computer device.

33. (Amended) A system for validating gaming pay-out vouchers dispensed from on-line electronic gaming machines used by players, the system comprising:

a central computer programmed with a pay-out voucher verification program and configured to receive pay-out voucher identification information and a related pay-out amount generated and automatically conveyed by an on-line electronic gaming machine when a pay-out voucher is dispensed to a player from the on-line electronic gaming machine at the termination of a gaming session;

a pay-out voucher database comprising pay-out voucher records; and

a plurality of wireless computer devices adapted for manual transport and configured for use by gaming establishment personnel, each of said wireless computer devices comprising

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a data input interface configured to receive manually or semi-manually entered pay-out voucher identification information based upon information existing on the pay-out vouchers dispensed from the on-line electronic gaming machines;

a wireless transceiver configured to communicate with said central computer via a remote wireless interface and transmit voucher validation requests thereby, and to receive validation responses from the central computer, and

a display configured to display information pertaining to the validation responses received from the central computer.

34. (Amended) The system of claim 33, wherein the pay-out vouchers are dispensed from the on-line electronic gaming machines at the termination of gaming sessions in response to player pay-out requests and reflect amounts of gaming machine credit accumulated during the gaming sessions.
